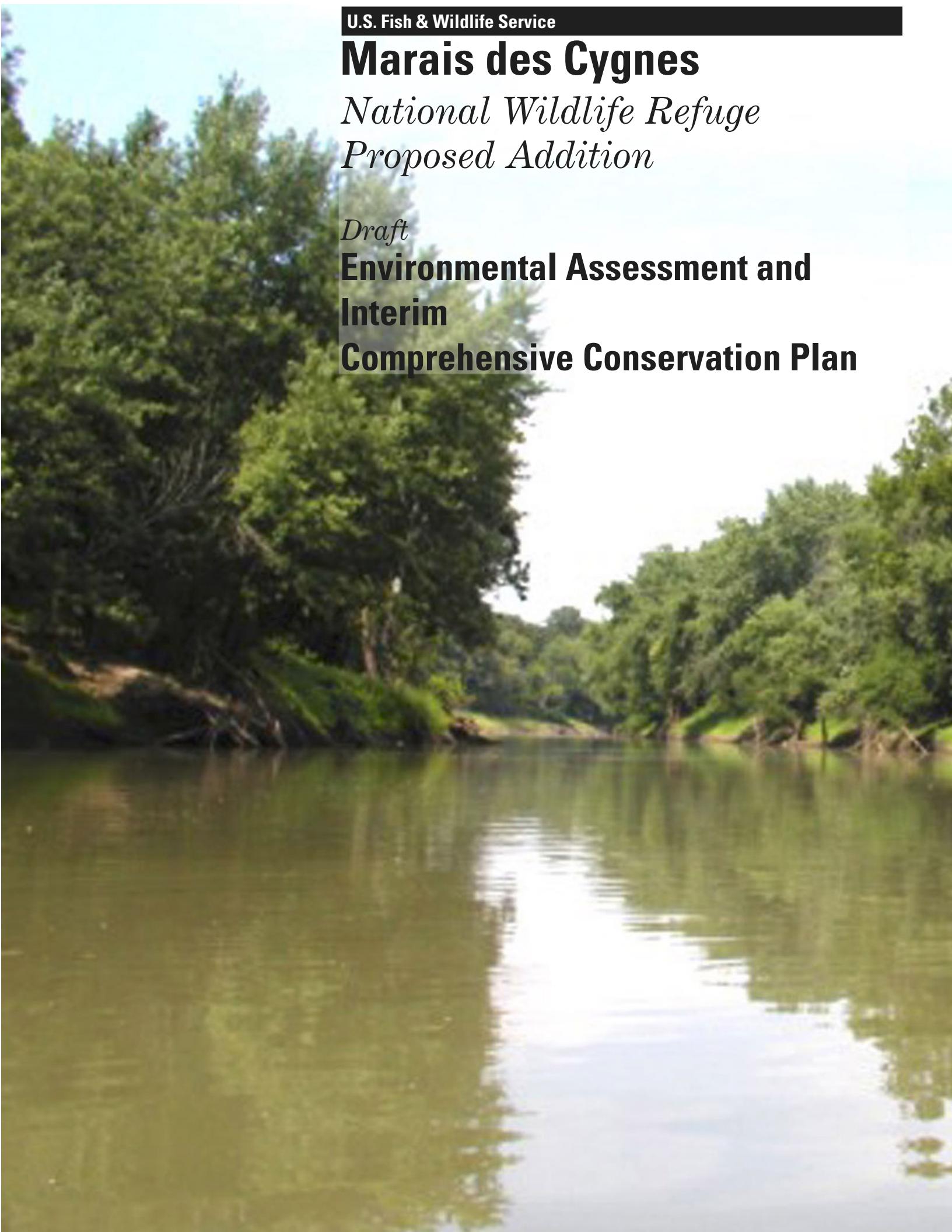


Marais des Cygnes

*National Wildlife Refuge
Proposed Addition*

Draft

**Environmental Assessment and
Interim
Comprehensive Conservation Plan**





IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
1 Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056



FWS/NWRS-AP

January 31, 2003

Dear Reader:

This Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) describes a proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to create an addition to the Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is located in Linn County, Kansas, and the area of the Proposed Addition is in Bates County, Missouri. The Draft EA evaluates three alternatives for protecting and restoring fish and wildlife habitats and also examines the consequences of a "no action" alternative.

The Alternative we are proposing to implement is Alternative C - Protect and Restore Floodplain and Adjacent Upland Habitat Along Missouri Reaches of the Marais des Cygnes River by Acquiring Additional Lands. The Proposed Addition could eventually restore and permanently protect a landscape of 5,255 acres of floodplain hardwood forest with associated shallow and deepwater wetlands, 5,890 acres of tallgrass prairie and savannah, 7.2 miles of large streams, and 8.8 miles of river.

We invite you to review the Draft EA and tell us what you think. Your comments on the draft document will help us write a final EA that accurately addresses the issues and opportunities this project presents.

We need to hear from you by March 31, 2003, to consider your comments when writing the final EA.

Please address written comments to: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge, 24141 Kansas Highway 52, Pleasanton, Kansas 66075-8214. Comments may also be submitted through our Internet web site at <http://midwest.fws.gov/planning/marais>. Please mention that you are commenting on the Marais des Cygnes proposal.

Thank you for your time, thoughts and interest in conservation planning in Missouri and Kansas.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Larson
Chief, Branch of Ascertainment and Planning

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